

# NEW ACQUISITIONS

SUMMER 2022



JACARANDA





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ART AND ANTIQUES FROM AFRICA, OCEANIA AND THE AMERICAS



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[www.jacarandatribal.com](http://www.jacarandatribal.com)

[dori@jacarandatribal.com](mailto:dori@jacarandatribal.com)

T +1 646-251-8528

New York City, NY 10025

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# NEW ACQUISITIONS

SUMMER 2022

We are pleased to present our latest online exhibition,  
*New Acquisitions – Summer 2022*.

Comprising 16 exceptional objects from Africa, Oceania and North America, our selection includes both figurative and non-figurative works. Highlights include an exceptional pair of puppets from South Africa, an important ritual wooden seal from Alaska, an excavated Alaskan male figure and a playfully anthropomorphic Zulu snuff spoon. We are also offering a stunning little Pende pendant mask and an ancient medieval Ethiopian cross, one of the finest of its

kind. We hope you will enjoy our offerings. Please contact us for more information including price lists, condition reports and additional images.

We will be virtual participants in the Santa Fe Objects of Art Show from August 11–31. We will also be in Paris in September on a buying trip during *Parcours des Mondes* – we hope to see you at the show.

*Dori & Daniel Rootenberg*

NEW YORK CITY, AUGUST 2022















# HEADREST, *MUTSAGO*

ZIMBABWE

Late 19th / early 20th century

Wood, string

Height: 5 ½ in; Width: 6 in

## PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

Ubiquitous in southern African societies, headrests were prized and revered as indispensable items, not only for their protection of carefully maintained coiffures during sleep but also in their spiritual role as conduits of communication with ancestor spirits.

The central panel of this Zimbabwean headrest is dominated by two concentric circle designs, each surrounded and joined by areas of asymmetrically carved angular and linear motifs. The symbol of the triangle is reproduced and echoed throughout. Each side of the rest shows unique details and two distinct approaches to the theme, carved with a vigorous, almost improvisational feeling in the organically spreading and compacting groups of incisions. An original, intact cord remains attached to the rest, which is very rarely seen.

The traditional circular motifs carved into this rest have been discussed by many scholars, and their symbolism is deeply connected with images and metaphors of the female. They may allude to female scarification marks (*myora*) and *ndoro* shells, calling to mind the ancestors (*mudzimu/mhondoro*) and the women who guarantee fertility. Alternatively, they may suggest breasts, or perhaps the concentric ripples caused by a stone dropped into a body of water. Further references to the female can be found in the form of the rest's base, composed of two round, swelling disks joined by a triangular 'pubis'. While the meaning of these details remains debated, the overall gestalt of the piece is reminiscent of an abstract female form.

In good condition. Some old cracks have been professionally restored.















## PRESTIGE STICK BY ATELIER OF THE BABOON MASTER CARVER

TSONGA OR ZULU, SOUTH AFRICA

Late 19th / early 20th century

Wood, pokerwork

Height: 34 in

### PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

At the end of the nineteenth century, there were several migrant Tsonga craftsmen in the colony of Natal who carved hardwood figural staffs for sale to the emerging European market. Many British soldiers arrived in the region to fight in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and then later in the South African War of 1899–1902, and they all wanted keepsakes to take home with them. As Colonel Henry Fanshawe Davies of the Grenadier Guards noted in a letter home in April 1879, “I bought a Zulu’s walking stick at Durban.”

The most famous of these Tsonga carvers worked in the region of Pietermaritzburg and Durban in the 1880s and 1890s and came to be known as the ‘Baboon Master’ in reference to staffs that he carved in the form of a baboon

astride two male busts. He also crafted fine Zulu male and female figures, and it is now thought that his distinctive carvings were also used as ceremonial and prestige items by the Zulu.

The fine staff presented here features the hallmarks of his atelier. A robust baboon figure with a barrel chest, large head, and long legs is supported by two smaller male Zulu busts, which in turn are united below in a stirrup-shaped structure. Their hair, darkened with pokerwork, displays the characteristic ornament that signifies maturity and marriage; covered with a mixture of gum, charcoal, and oil, this distinctive coiffure, known as *isicoco*, employed a fiber or sinew ring into which the wearer’s hair was woven.















## PROCESSIONAL CROSS

ETHIOPIA, ZAGWE DYNASTY

c.12th–13th century (late Zagwe dynasty)

Bronze alloy

Height: 10 in; Width: 6 in

### PROVENANCE

Estate Sale France, 1960

Alan Reiver, New York, 1991

Milos Simovic, New York, 1999

Elongated cross pattée framed by an oval flare with finials and three smaller crosses cradled by stylized “wings” which also extend out from the lower body of the cross, which is in turn supported by a square framed cross whose lower arm extends in the central ridge of the shaft.

This form, sometimes referred to as a Lalibela Cross, (although this term is used for other, more numerous, round processional crosses as well) after the famous emperor of the Zagwe dynasty during whose reign most of the famous rock hewn churches were carved, is a beautiful and certainly best-known form of the metal crosses produced in early medieval Ethiopia. Often the cross pattée is framed by an elongated frame and may include two crosses in the center of main body.

The stylized wings and birds can be traced in their origins

to early Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian and other illuminated manuscripts. The shaft of the cross has been repaired at a later date. The original shaft almost certainly did not have the loops, known as “Adam’s arms”.

The cross is in very good condition. The main body is thick and intact with no damage, some metal pitting and patina consistent with age and use, hairline crack to cross pattée. The cross was produced from bronze alloy, using the lost-wax technique. The original shaft was removed and repaired at some point, possibly in the 17th -18th century. It was either partially heated or recast to join an additional longer shaft with loops (usually used for festive cloth when the cross is carried on a staff). The shaft has been attached by rivets, since loosened.















## BOWL

MAKIRA ISLAND (SAN CRISTOBAL),  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

19th century

Blackened wood

Height: 7 in; Width: 12 in

### PROVENANCE

Harry Geoffrey Beasley, Cranmore, Chislehurst, acquired in 1937

Irene M. Beasley, Sunningdale and Brighton, by descent from  
the above

John. J. Klejman, New York, acquired from the above

Martin and Faith-Dorian Wright, New York, acquired from the  
above on January 16, 1968

Of singular design, this remarkable bowl, *apira ni farunga*, from the Solomon Islands of Melanesia rises beyond the level of being purely a ceremonial vessel to a dramatic tableau as the artist has ingeniously decorated the receptacle with figurative elements that act not so much as caryatids as ceremonial acolytes as they present the contents of the bowl with their outstretched arms at the sides of the vessel.

The striking bowl is supported on a single domed base placed at the centre of the vessel's underside; from the tapering curves of the base, the bowl flares in contrapuntal architecture as it expands into its rectangular/oval form. The sides of the bowl are undecorated until they approximate the lip of the bowl, where, at the sides we observe sharp angular geometric motifs rendered as staggered bands that follow the curving contours of the bowl's lip.

At both extremities of the bowl, we find a heroic human figure, expressly defined by the corporeal elements that act

in tandem to grasp the bowl and present its contents to the viewer. Using almost exclusively the power of their arms to grapple the challenging expanse of the bowl's curvature, the body of the figures is suspended to bring the hips and legs inwards so that they make contact with the bowl through their knees as a secondary point of compression and, as the lower legs bend downwards, with their feet, which they bend upwards to touch the underside of the bowl with the toes. The slight distension of the abdomen and torso of the figures imparts an engaging and humble character to the figures. The musculature of the arms is defined by the modelling of upper and lower arms, which stretch forwards and outwards to their limits as the hands, with well-defined digits, grasp the sides of the bowl and allow the figure to present the ceremonial foods within in a feat of great acrobatic ability.

Holding the bowl tightly, the figures are forced to also support the physical challenge with their chests, which they join to the bowl as well as their necks, which allow the heads of the figures to rest on the wide lip of the bowl as they look inwards to overhang the concavity of the bowl beneath them. Unlike the frigate birds seen on other







ceremonial bowls or the canoe prow figures, *toto-isu* or *nguzu nguzu*, which face outwards for considerations of design and symbolic value, the present figures focus their attention on the contents of the bowl and the attendant ceremony in which it features.

The heads of the figures are sculpted in a manner reminiscent of canoe prow ornamental figures – the extended, exaggerated mandible creates a prognathous jawline and approximates, morphologically, something zoomorphic. At the end of the jaws, the mouth is held open with full lips and the detail of dental rows within.

A dramatic nasal feature accentuates the face of the figures – with an oversize ridge, it travels the length of the angled face and terminates in a slightly Roman nose with a curving tip and visible nasal wings. The ocular features are assumed into the concavity from which the nose emerges. At the top of the head, a foreshortened forehead gives way to a fascinating stylized coiffure – at the top of the head, a cap-like extension sits on the curving plaits of hair that flow downwards and backwards, where they are suspended over the back of the figure in the graceful curl of a flip.

According to Magali Mélandri and Sandra Revolon, the Reverend Léopold Verguet, a Marist missionary who visited the island of San Cristobal in 1846, described the preparation of ceremonial foods, on a base of ripe coconut, presented in these bowls: “Men are exclusively engaged in the preparation of these pastes; their preparation is forbidden to women. Once prepared, the paste is done, it is removed from the cylinder, placed in the great bowls carefully made from a single piece of hollowed wood and painted in black. They align the bowls in the shed and decorate them with leaves and flowers. The tribe then come together to feast as a group.”<sup>1</sup> Mélandri and Revolon comment further that “...these bowls, which are still used by Solomon Islanders, are used in funerary rituals known as *farunga*. These ceremonies are held on the initiative of



a dignitary some five to ten years after the initial funeral and develop in two important stages: the first, called *ratai matafu* (trans. ‘finish the tombs’), takes place when the stones or cement screed have been laid or poured over the tombs of the dead.

The second phase, *muri ni nuni* (trans. ‘after a person’), takes the form of a second funeral that bring definitive closure to the mourning period. It is a common belief that the *farunga* has the objective or reminding the dead of the land or money that they have left to their heirs. The principle is to spend for the dead and to thank them for that which they have left us.”<sup>2</sup>

An old collection label is visible on the underside of the bowl and reads ‘Beasley Collection. Solomon. Gr. St. Cristoval. 4452 2813(?) 37’

<sup>1</sup> Magali Mélandri and Sandra Revolon, ‘Bol cérémoniel et présence des morts’, in: Musée du Quai Branly, *L’Éclat des Ombres*, Paris, 2014, p. 153

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 154–155























## FEMALE FIGURE

LULUWA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Late 19th century

Wood

Height: 10 in

### PROVENANCE

F. Webb, probably purchased at the H. Pareyn sale, Antwerp, December 1928. Henry Pareyn was a collector in Antwerp, Belgium and was active from 1905–1928.

Private collection, USA

The Luluwa people live in south-central Democratic Republic of the Congo, along the shores of the Luluwa River in the north and the Kasai River in the west. Taking influence from the powerful artistic traditions of the neighboring Luba, Chokwe, and Kuba, the Luluwa developed highly sophisticated art forms of their own. Their remarkable statuary stands among the foremost of these.

The figures they created reflect an intense philosophical concentration on physical beauty, expressed in the Chiluba term *bwimpe*, which denotes physical perfection as a measure of moral integrity. This unity of beauty and goodness was shown through anatomy as well as scarification and other forms of skin modification. Such beautifying marks are depicted in the elaborate relief designs that decorate the bodies of some Luluwa figures. Idealized beauty, beyond both the aesthetic and the philosophical, was also intended as an invitation to the

ancestral spirits to inhabit the sculptures and actualize their intermediary role between the natural and supernatural worlds.

The ritual figure presented here is known as *bwanga bwa bwimpe*. This is a female type with a prominent maternal belly and bulging umbilicus, holding in both hands a mortar and pestle. The characteristics of ideal beauty are most clearly shown in the large head with high, round brow and serene, wide-set eyes, along with scarifications on the face and neck. A tall, horn-shaped coiffure projects from the crown of the head, a reference to clairvoyance and ‘second sight.’

As an icon of *bwimpe*, such a figure would have been regarded as a defense against witchcraft and malignant spirits. *Bwanga bwa bwimpe* were objects of significant ritual focus and commonly received frequent ritual coatings of oil, kaolin, and red camwood powder.























## MINIATURE MASK

DAN PEOPLE, LIBERIA

Late 19th/ early 20th century

Wood

Height: 3 in; Width: 1 ¾ in

### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

Most Dan face masks, and those of the culturally related groups of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, are commonly executed in a miniature form. Any individual who has a spiritual connection with a mask, or whose family owns an important mask, is entitled to commission a miniature. Rubbed with oil and food, they are wrapped up and kept on the owner's body or among their possessions and function as portable and personal forms that share the power and protective force of the full-sized mask.

Miniature masks bear many names: the most common is *ma go* (small head) but, depending on scholarship, it has also been named *yi luo po* (thing which water is poured over), *gba po* (thing which is fed), or *nyonkula* (substitute for the ancestors). When a mask-owner is traveling, the miniature mask serves as an important means of identification outside their immediate community. This role of the mask has given rise to the commonly used term

“passport mask.”

Though typically viewed as personal objects, in certain instances miniature masks may also play a communal role in secret societies. They are included among the sacred objects displayed at men's society meetings to protect the men collectively and are used as sacred objects for taking oaths and for swearing to tell the truth. The miniature masks are often attached to other powerful objects such as leather pouches or antelope horns filled with medicines. In this context, their backs can also be stuffed with magical potent ingredients.

The miniature mask presented here shows a prominent, domed forehead, indented horizontal eyeline, snub nose and full, downturned lips. Significant use has worn away the finer detail of its features, particularly the eyes and brows, and the nose and lips are shallow in profile.















## HELMET MASK

MENDE PEOPLE, LIBERIA

First half 20th century

Wood

Height: 14 in; Width: 7 ½ in

### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

Mende society is governed by several esoteric associations, foremost among which are the Sande women's society and Poro men's society. Both prepare young initiates for adulthood and make extensive use of masking. From generation to generation, such masks served to induct the new adults of the tribe into the next chapter of their lives, welcoming them to fully embrace the knowledge and lineage of their ancestors.

The splendid helmet mask presented here, known as *ndoli jowei*, represents a Sande guardian spirit. It shows a dense composition of closely packed forms, alternately

sharp and softly undulating. The comely smoothness of the high forehead, diamond-shaped face, and bunched neck rings (a physical feature the Mende view as a sign of prosperity, fertility, and beauty) contrasts marvelously with the sharp and intensely detailed textures of the elaborate coiffure, which is designed with a fantastic array of braid panels and a topknot. A sumptuous black patina provides ample highlights that delineate and emphasize the complex interplay of shapes at work in this magnificently carved helmet mask.























## MALE AND FEMALE PUPPETS FOR DIVINATION

### SOUTH AFRICA

Late 19th century

Wood, leather, fiber, beads, feathers, metal rings

Height: 9 in for the taller puppet (excluding feathers),

8 1/2 in for the shorter puppet

#### PROVENANCE

##### SHORTER PUPPET:

Sotheby's New York

Kevin Conru, Brussels

Private European collection

##### TALLER PUPPET:

Irwin Hersey, New York

Nobel Endicott, New York

Kevin Conru, Brussels

Private European collection

Puppets have been used in ritual and social contexts for centuries across Africa. Puppets were utilized in a variety of forms and for a wide array of purposes, including healing, initiation, education, divination, and judicial decisions. Performances by puppeteers told stories both mythical and historical, preserving religious beliefs and instilling moral values while entertaining the community.

From what is known of puppets in South Africa traditions, they appear to have been used primarily for entertainment, and by diviners. The charming pair of articulated puppets offered here correspond to a type distributed by Tsonga diviner/healers across a territory from

Mozambique to northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Both puppets are armless, with jointed knees that allow the lower legs to swing, as they would have when suspended on the puppeteer's lines. Their faces show shallowly incised, almost geometric features, and the head of the puppet on the right is encircled by the stylized coiffure ring of adult men. Classic Nguni beadwork panels and bands adorn their torsos and ankles. The larger figure is clothed in a mantle of hide strips and sports feather attachments to the crown of its head, while the smaller wears a woman's beadwork headband. The beadwork appears to originate in the Southern Drakensberg region.

Southern African puppets are exceptionally rare and prized. Beside these two on offer, a handful of examples exist, including a string of five puppets in the Ed and Mina Smith collection, and an example in the Saul Stanoff collection.























## SWORD CLUB

MASSIM, MILNE BAY PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

19th century

Wood

Length: 31 in

### PROVENANCE

John Friede, Rye, New York

Ben Birillo, New York

While sword-shaped wooden clubs were relatively common melee weapons in Massim territory, few of them show the refined details and elegant design boasted by the present example. Perhaps the first feature that catches the eye is the large openwork finial at the pommel, which depicts the sleek head of a sea bird, its stylized features rendered in relief and a small sphere, perhaps a berry, held in its beak. The club's wide blade, reminiscent of a paddle, presents a

beautifully carved, symmetrical relief design at its center. Here sinuous and volute motifs are symmetrically opposed around a narrow central band filled with a mesmerizing wave pattern. The arrow-like motifs may be abstract bird or snake representations, echoing the iconography of the finial. A shallow, transverse line is found below the tip of the blade, segmenting it in a manner that suggests phallic symbolism and an evocation of male virility in the weapon.























## POLE CLUB, BOWAI

TONGA

19th century

Wood

Length: 37 in

PROVENANCE

Robert Noble

Polynesian weapons are known for their bold and sometimes intricate hardwood designs. This Tongan pole club (*'akau povai*) is a remarkable fusion of both, marrying a streamlined, simple silhouette with incredibly meticulous surface detailing. The club's upper half is entirely covered in finely worked geometric patterns – including waving sawtooth motifs, bars, thin bands, and panels of hatching – that abut in angled transitions, evoking the wrapping of a textile.

Tongan war clubs as a general group are known by the term *'akau*, which means 'stave.' They were some of the most numerous objects collected during James Cook's voyages

in the 1770s, reflecting the militaristic collecting interests of the European curiosities markets. Along with spears, *'akau* were the principal weapons of war in Tonga up until the middle of the nineteenth century, despite the earlier introduction of firearms.

*'Akau* were also found within a broad range of other cultural contexts, including sport, religion, performance, and dance. They were conspicuous and important repositories of *mana*, or spiritual force, and generated an aura of *tapu* that set them exclusively in a prohibited sphere to which those of inferior social class were denied access.















## HARP

TSOGO OR LUMBO, GABON

Late 19th/early 20th century

Wood, hide, remains of string

Height: 21 in; Width: 20 in

### PROVENANCE

Private Collection, USA

The creation of arched harps fitted with soundboxes and featuring prominent human head finials is a tradition belonging to several peoples in the central belt of Africa, including the Tsogo, Lumbo, Zande, Mangbetu, and Punu. The style of five-stringed harp found in the Mangbetu corpus, sometimes called “bow-harps,” are theorized to have been adopted by the Mangbetu from the Zande sometime around the beginning of the colonial period, possibly adapting extant harp designs which were introduced previously from the Mangbele and Matchaga.

The harp consists of two primary halves – a faceted, roughly hourglass-shaped soundbox of animal skin and a curved neck of wood – bound together with cord. The instrument is strung with vegetable or animal fiber and tuned with five long pegs that protrude from the neck. At the top of the neck is often carved a human head, though some early twentieth-century examples feature more

elaborate designs with full figures.

Little is known of the music that was played upon these harps, but ethnologist Georg August Schweinfurth, writing in the 1870s, recorded that they were played with great zeal and often for prodigious lengths of time, producing monotonous sounds that served primarily as an accompaniment to oral recitation and which transported their players “into a profound ecstasy.”

This example is preserved in good condition, though its strings are missing. The head finial is carved with simple, strong, and stylized shapes, with a ridged coiffure that sweeps smoothly back to the neck. Its mouth is agape, likely a direct reference to the tireless oral recitations of the harpist. A dark patina emphasizes and solidifies the instrument’s curved silhouette, increasing its sculptural force.















## PENDANT

PENDE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Late 19th/early 20th century

Wood

Height: 2 ¼ in; Width: 1 ½ in

### PROVENANCE

Ex-colonial collection, Belgium

Pierre Loos, Brussels

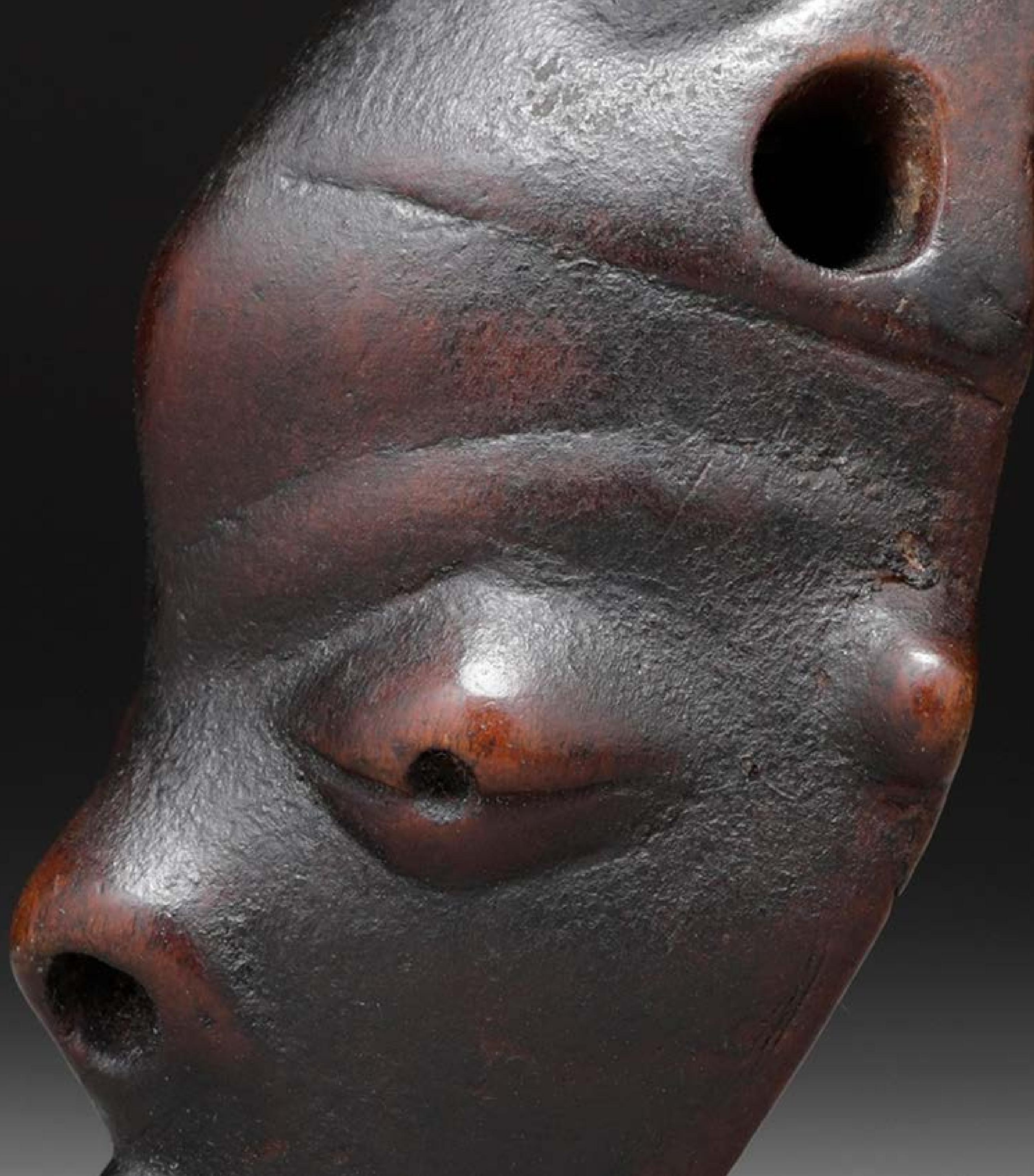
Private Collection, Belgium

The Central Pende have a tradition of replicating large ceremonial dance masks (*mbuya*) in miniature form. These masquettes represent spirits and ancestors and are worn by men and women alike.

The present pendant mask is of classic *ikhokho* design, showing a wide face surmounted by a three-pointed hat or

coiffure and tapering sharply to a pointed chin. The facial features are rounded, protuberant, and fleshy, lending an impression of naturalism. A deep, dark patina encrusts the full surface of this small masterpiece, with warm brown highlights at the contact points enhancing its sculptural dimension.















## SEAL EFFIGY

### NORTHWEST COAST

19th century

Wood, baleen, walrus ivory

Length: 10 ½ in

#### PUBLICATION HISTORY

Sacred Circles: 2000 Years of North American Art, 1977. Illustrated on p 121, # 234.

#### EXHIBITION HISTORY

Sacred Circles: 2000 Years of North American Art. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City and the Hayward Gallery, London

#### PROVENANCE

Harry Geoffrey Beasley, London

Judith Nash, New York

Jeffrey Myers, New York

The art of the Arctic is full of animal representations, predominantly those of the sea mammals upon which human survival in those latitudes relies, such as the seal and the walrus. These animal images reflect a profound spiritual and existential bond between hunter and prey, and they were used both to propitiate the animal spirits and to empower their owners in the hunt.

The sleek, zoomorphic carving offered here is likely an important effigy implement used by a shaman in rites surrounding the hunting of seal. It is similar in form to a wound plug, a tool carried by Eskimo hunters that was

inserted into the wounds of struck game to preserve their blood for later use. Alternatively, it may be a throat plug, which prevented the animal from filling with water and sinking as it was being pulled to shore behind a kayak.

Above its incised muzzle, the wide-open, inlaid eyes of the seal lend a sense of active awareness and lively character to the piece. From the underside projects a small half-loop to which are attached a group of three charm-like carvings. These also depict seal imagery and may have functioned as a rattle to accompany the movements of the shaman.















## MALE FIGURE

### ALASKA

18th century

Wood, paint

Height: 6 ½ in, Width: 3 ¾ in

### PROVENANCE

Excavated at Brevig Mission, Alaska

Jeffrey Myers, New York

This excavated wooden bust, carved simply with a broad, oval face and pentagonal torso, was used as a grave marker effigy figure placed in a model canoe. Its spare but characterful features show a prominent nose with the remains of a painted mustache, gently arching browlines, subtly swelling cheekbones, and hollowed eye sockets and mouth. The deep groove incised around the circumference of the face was likely applied to depict a parka and there are diagonal score marks ornamenting the chest. Viewed in profile, the face effects a naturalistic impression with its

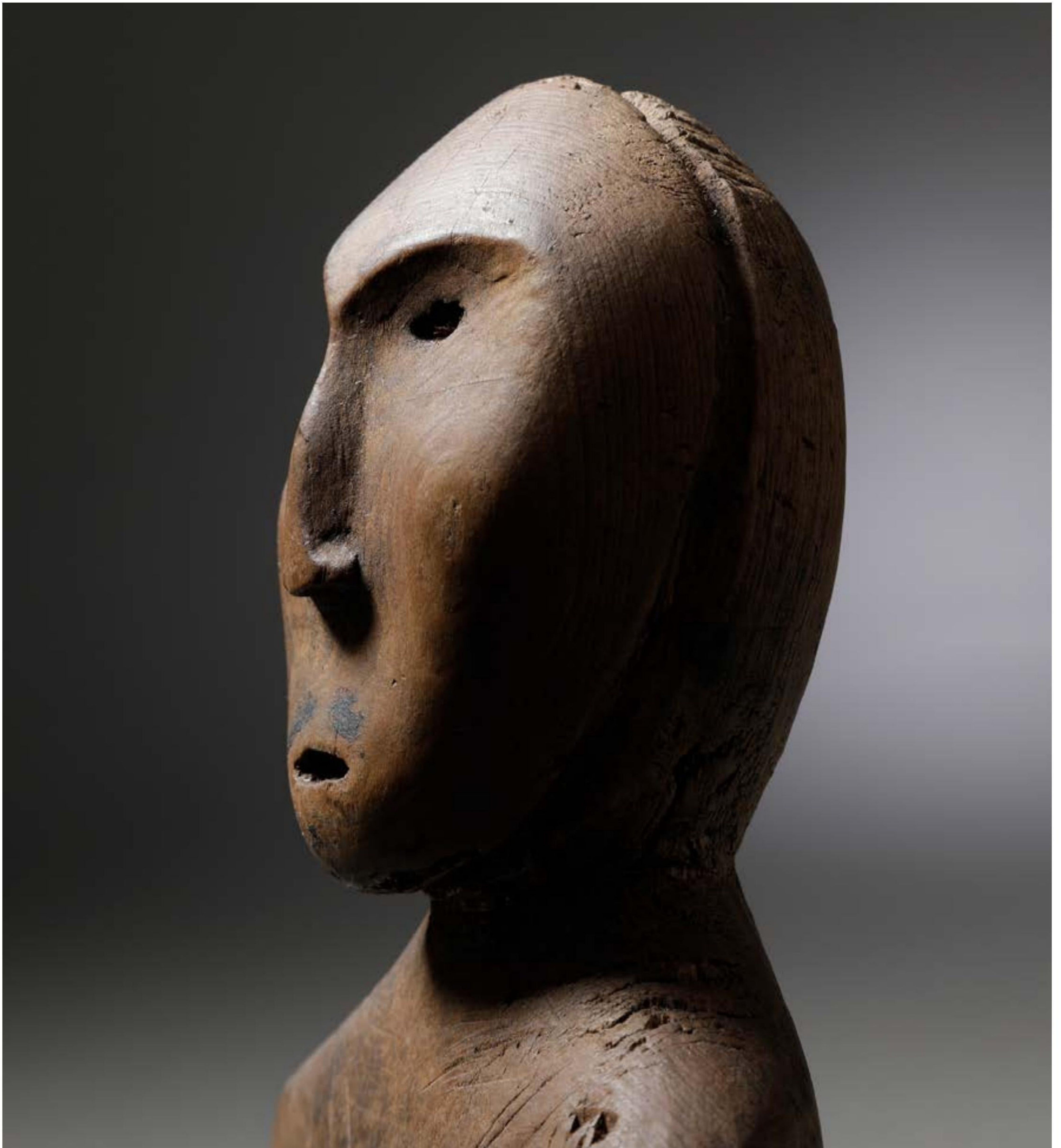
sharp nose and soft curvature.

When installed in place as a grave marker, this figure was probably fixed in a small model kayak. Two outstretched arms would have been attached to the shoulders using the socket holes seen here, and the whole figure would fit firmly over an upright peg in the kayak using the hole on the underside. Thus composed, the ensemble would be placed at the very top of a tall grave post, to which would be attached various utilitarian items that belonged to the deceased, such as cookware, paddles, guns, hunting gear, or other tools.

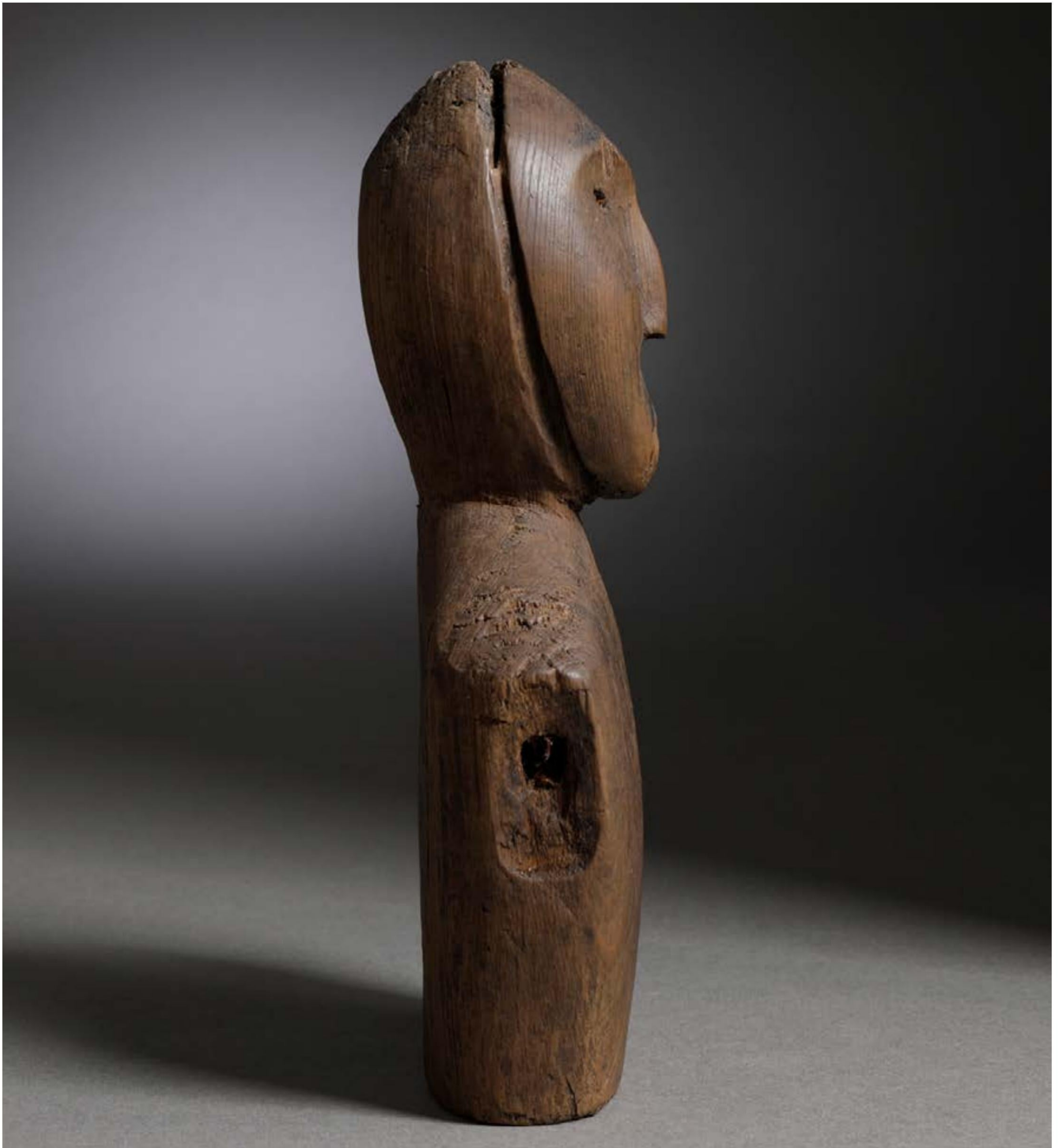






















## DOUBLE SNUFF SPOON / INTSHENGULA

SOUTH AFRICA

Late 19th century

Bone, ash colorant

Height: 6 in

### PROVENANCE

Kevin Conru, Brussels

Private Belgium collection

The taking of snuff was ubiquitous in traditional South African societies, featuring in lively community gatherings and gift-giving, and aiding communication with the ancestors. Snuff paraphernalia naturally proliferated in the form of containers of various sizes and materials, as well as elegantly crafted spoons. Zulu snuff spoons were frequently carved from the rib bones of oxen or cows and decorated with incised and punched designs blackened with fat and ash. They were used to draw snuff from a container or to remove sweat from the brow.

This kit of delicate items was habitually carried on one's person, and the ingenuity of South African artists

inspired creative solutions for keeping the oft-used tools conveniently close at hand. Many nineteenth-century photographs show Zulu men wearing spoons in their hair or through an earlobe, which the spoons' shapes were designed to accommodate.

The present spoon is of the comb type, intended to be worn in the hair as an accessory when not in use. Its unusual double-bowled design shows imagination in both utility and representation. With a silhouette that strongly suggests an abstract human form in profile, it can be read as a standing figure with arched back and exaggerated buttocks, or as a pregnant woman.















## SNUFF CONTAINER

SOUTH AFRICA

Late 19th century

Horn

Height: 2 in

### PROVENANCE

Kevin Conru, Brussels

Private Belgium collection

This snuff container is a flawlessly-executed ovoid – an outstanding example of the refined, abstract style seen in many objects from southern Africa. Its lustrous, pearlescent and brown surface recalls a seed-like shape. Fashioned from animal horn, it is both a pleasure for the eye and a tactile delight when handled. Balanced on a slightly truncated base, matched at its top end by a similarly flattened surface,

and sealed with a small hemispherical stopper, the final silhouette is one of consummate elegance. A small aperture halfway down one side has been drilled, through which a cord or thong was threaded so that it could be worn around the neck. Beyond its southern African provenance, it is a challenge to pinpoint a more precise place of origin.











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[dori@jacarandatribal.com](mailto:dori@jacarandatribal.com)

T +1 646-251-8528

New York City, NY 10025

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